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2017



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American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.



NPBN
National Prison
Braille Network

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2017

NATIONAL PRISON BRAILLE FORUM

Building
the
Business



Essential
Ingredients

Transition
& Reentry



HYATT REGENCY HOTEL
OCTOBER 11, 2017



American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.



NPBN
National Prison
Braille Network

17th Annual
National Prison Braille Forum
October 11, 2017

Best Practices and Innovations

7:30AM Breakfast, Networking

8:00	Welcome Around the Room introductions Photography, Social Media Network update Stipend recipients KCIW Tour on Thursday, October 12	Nancy Lacewell Gary Mudd Lauren Hicks Becky Snider Dorinda Rife Allison Scheinost
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8:50	APH, Accessible Textbooks updates	Jeremy Ockerman
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9:00 Break – Travel to Breakout Rooms

9:15 Small Group Discussions

A1 Building the Business

Establishing a New Program on a Solid Foundation
 Jill Ischinger, SC; Cecilia Peredo, APH
South Ballroom A

B1 Essential Ingredients

Developing and Strengthening Relationships Between
 Vision Professionals and Corrections Officials
 Leslie Durst, IN; Gary Mudd, APH
South Ballroom B

C1 Transition and Reentry

On the Inside: Preparing Inmates for Reentry and
 Successful Careers as Transcribers
 Delores Billman, TX; Howard Parker, APH
Churchill Downs

10:15 Break – Travel to Breakout Rooms

10:30 Small Group Discussions

A2 **Building the Business**

Marketing, Sales and Customer Service
Jane Thompson, APH; Dorinda Rife, APH
South Ballroom A

B2 **Essential Ingredients**

Tactile Graphics: Processes, Tools, and Equipment
Sally Hart, APH; Jeremy Ockerman, APH
South Ballroom B

C2 **Transition and Reentry**

On the Outside: Supporting Graduates, Setting up
Networks, and Fostering Mentor/Mentee Relationships
Randy Davis, GA; Jayma Hawkins, APH
Churchill Downs

11:30 Lunch, Networking

1:00PM **Braille Transcriber Apprenticeship Program (BTAP) Update**

1:30 Breakout session reports, discussion:

- A1: Jill Ischinger, SC; Cecilia Peredo, APH
- A2: Jane Thompson, APH; Dorinda Rife, APH
- B1: Leslie Durst, IN; Gary Mudd, APH
- B2: Sally Hart, APH; Jeremy Ockerman, APH
- C1: Delores Billman, TX; Howard Parker, APH
- C2: Randy Davis, GA; Jayma Hawkins, APH

3:00 Break

3:15 Reports: Challenges and Solutions Across the Country

- Connecticut grant Cecilia Peredo, APH
- Tennessee program Kathy Segers, TN
- 7-year policy Jennifer Fenton, WA
- KCI Braille Services Warden Janet Conover, KY

4:30 Moving Forward with the National Prison Braille Network

5:00 Adjourn

2017 National Prison Braille Forum

Registration as of October 2, 2017

68 people from 17 states & 1 territory

State Order

**Indicates those who requested the tour of
KCI Braille Services on Thursday, October 12.*

Arizona

*Jared Leslie	Foundation for Blind Children
*Lisa Medley	The Geo Group/AZ State Prison, Kingman

California

*Grant Horrocks	CTEBVI (California Transcribers and Educators of the BVI)
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Connecticut

*James Gaglione	Correctional Enterprises of CT
*Nancy Mothersele	Dept. of Rehab. Services/Bureau of Education & Services for the Blind in the State of CT

Delaware

Anne Lattanzi	DE Division for the Visually Impaired
Matthew Tseronis	DE Division for the Visually Impaired
Erin Weaver	DE Division for the Visually Impaired

Georgia

*Carson Cochran	GA Dept. of Education – Instructional Materials Center
*J Randy Davis	Aloha Braille
Patrick Fraser	AMAC/GA Tech
*Tracy Gaines	CTEBVI (California Transcribers and Educators of the BVI)
Gabriel Gordon	AMAC/GA Tech
*Angie Scott	Georgia Braille Transcribers - Central State Prison

Indiana

*Michael Christianson	Ameriscribe Braille Services, Inc.
Leslie Durst	IN Educational Resource Center
Robert Eutz	Miami Accessible Media Project (MAMP)
Deb Krise	Miami Accessible Media Project (MAMP)
Betsy Scott	IN Educational Resource Center: Braille Project
*DeAnna Small	RNS Braille
*Russell Small	RNS Braille

Kentucky

Debbey Adams	APH
Vicki Buns	APH
Janet Conover	Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women
Terri Fox	Transcriber (former BTAP)
*Justin Gardner	APH
Will Gravin	APH
Sally Hart	APH
*Jayma Hawkins	APH
*Lauren Hicks	APH
Jeremy Johnson	APH
Vanessa Kennedy	Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women
*Nancy Lacewell	APH
*Brittany Lindle	APH
Anita McCraw	BTAP
Gary Mudd	APH
*Jeremy Ockerman	APH
Howard Parker II	APH
*Cecilia Peredo	APH
Dorinda Rife	APH
*Allison Scheinost	APH
Steve Schoch	Kentucky Correctional Industries
Jeanette Sisco	Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women
W. Scott Smith	APH
Becky Snider	APH
Jane Thompson	APH
Denise Walls	Kentucky Correctional Industries
Joe Woods	Kentucky Correctional Industries

Michigan

*Cindy Olmstead	MI Braille Transcribing Fund (MBTF)
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Montana

*Janice Stromberg	Corrections Corporation of America
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New Jersey

*Christine Hinton	NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Diane Sage	American Red Cross New Jersey Region
Sharon Van Horn	American Red Cross New Jersey Region

New Mexico

Mary Vaughn	NM School for the Blind and Visually Impaired
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Ohio

Samuel Foulkes	Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
Saul Garza	Clovernook Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired
*J. Paul Hendrix	Grafton Braille Center
*Shelley Mack	OICALI (OH Center for Autism and Low Incidence)-AT&AEM

Puerto Rico

*Luz Robles	PR Department of Education
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South Carolina

Jill Ischinger	SC School for the Deaf and the Blind
Marilyn Tessaro	SC School for the Deaf and the Blind

Tennessee

*Michael Nash	TRICOR – State of TN
Fred Roach	TRICOR – State of TN
*Kathy Segers	TN School for the Blind

Texas

Delores Billman	TX Department of Criminal Justice
Tammy Nixon	TX Department of Criminal Justice

Washington

Jennifer Fenton	WA State School for the Blind
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Wyoming

Shari Zwiebel	WY Brand Industries (WBI) Braille
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2017 National Prison Braille Forum



American Printing House
for the Blind, Inc.

October 11, 2017
Roster of Participants
** APH Ex Officio Trustee*



*68 participants from 17 states & 1 territory
20 prison braille programs*

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Tactile Graphics: The Basics

Production Methods Most Commonly Used:

Collage: This is a hands-on method of layering textured materials to a paper foundation to form a raised image.

- Production and duplication equipment required:
 - Braille paper
 - Household items (see material list)
 - Vacuum-form machine and plastic sheets for thermoforming

Electronic: Computer assisted method created by using a graphic software program.

- Software programs:
 - CorelDraw
 - A braille tactile macro group you can join: tactile-macros@googlegroups.com
 - Adobe Illustrator
 - Freeware programs such as Inkscape
- Top 3 high resolution embosser:
 - ViewPlus Technologies' Tiger Embosser (comes with Tiger Software Suite)
 - Enabling Technologies Phoenix Embosser (comes with Firebird software)
 - Index Braille Index Embosser (TactileView software)

Collage, tooling, and embossed braille may be combined to form a tactile graphic master.

No matter the production method, a tactile graphic uses the same components to represent all necessary information. BANA *Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics*, 2010, defines the four primary components of a tactile graphic as:

Primary Components of a Tactile Graphic:

Area: An area represents a region that has specific significance in the graphic, such as states or provinces in a map, stripes of different colors in the drawing of a flag, or the layers of soil and rock classifications in a geological diagram. Areas are usually concrete portions of a diagram. (3.1.1)

Line: A line is linear information such as rivers, important geographic boundaries, historical routes (the Oregon Trail), or pathways (circulatory system or electrical circuit). In mathematical drawings, the line may be used to present the outline of a shape or indicate division, angles, or a length to be measured. Lines may represent either concrete or imaginary information. (3.1.2)

Point: A point symbol indicates a specific place within the graphic. It is usually placed in an area or on a line and represents specific data, such as a city, a bus stop, an oil well, a point in a line graph, or a gland in an anatomy diagram. (3.1.3)

Label: A label may be words or an alphabetic or numeric key used to identify an area, line, or point symbol. A reader can discern information more efficiently when words are used rather than when symbols or keys are added; however, the use of whole words may sometimes add too much clutter. (3.1.4)

Planning and Tactile Design Resources:

imagelibrary.aph.org : APH's Tactile Graphic Image Library (TGIL) contains a pool of well-designed templates to download for FREE to aid with the creation of tactile graphics.

<http://www.aph.org/tgtv/> : TGTV is a series of downloadable online videos from APH devoted to tactile graphic design. Each episode in the ongoing series will address one or two aspects of the design process involved in adapting a print graphic (for example, from a textbook) into a readable tactile image. TGTV focuses on the tactile graphic thought process and shows methods to interpret the print image in a way that is meaningful for tactile readers. The emphasis is on thinking about **tactile adaptation** rather than on "dos and don'ts."

<http://www.brailleauthority.org/tg/index.html> : *Guidelines and Standards for Tactile Graphics*, 2010, provides information about best practices, current methods, and design principles for the production of readable tactile graphics.

<http://www.tactilegraphics.org/resources.html> : Rocky Mountain Braille Associates LLC detailed list of Tactile Graphic Resources.

<https://www.nationalbraille.org/forums/>: Ask an Expert has a Tactile Graphic Forum.

<http://www.ctebvi.org/journal.html> ; <https://www.nationalbraille.org/category/bulletin/> Both the CTEBVI Journal and the NBA Bulletin contain Tactile Graphic articles.

"There is a great deal to consider when putting together the simplest graphic design. If it is not well thought out, no amount of effort in its production will make the design more understandable to your reader." –*Tactile Graphics*, by Polly K. Edman

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS FOR COLLAGE GRAPHICS TO BE THERMOFORMED FOR MASS PRODUCTION

Collage method is considered the most useful and effective method for conveying information when created properly with appropriate textured materials. Most items are available at Arts and Crafts Stores and Office Supplies Stores.

Areal symbols:

- Textured or corrugated paperboard, cardstock, and paper stock
- Different fabrics, corduroy, cross stitch, Handiwipes, etc.
- Leather or thin wood pieces
- Textured paper towels
- Sandpaper in different grits
- Tiger embossed textures

Note:

- Sandpaper can be very harsh on fingers. Only use fine (high grit) sandpaper if the tactile is for direct use.
- Sandpaper textures are very likely to lose tactual distinction on thermoform copy. Make sure you are familiar with the thermoform result of the sandpaper of your choice.
- Tiger embosser is capable of creating a variety of textures in different patterns, densities, and heights. Textures can be embossed directly on the final graphic, or used as textured collage materials to be cut & paste on the graphic page.
- Glitter is very difficult to create consistent textures and tend to fall off of paper over time. For this reason, glitter is not recommended.

Linear symbols:

- Glue treated cotton strings, candlewicks, carpet threads, etc. in different widths
- Strips of cardboard
- Paper or cloth covered floral wires
- Spur wheel tooling
- Edge of a solid areal piece (a natural linear symbol created by solid areal symbol piece)

Note:

- Strings or threads are often too loose and flimsy and likely to fray at the ends. Pretreat them with a small amount of glue and let dry to be more rigid and easy to work with, and result in much crispier lines on the tactile page.
- Knotted strings or threads are very aggressive and prominent linear symbols. Use only when necessary and appropriate.
- Cardboard strips can be used as linear symbol. Make sure to only use paperboard that is not easy to peel into layers. Loose paperboard like cereal boxes or other packaging materials are not dense enough and very likely to peel.
- Cardboard strips don't bend well. Use them as straight or slightly curved lines.

- Precut sticky-backed plastic strips can be used as prominent lines. They are not easy to modify once glued to the paper.

Point symbols:

- Precut or punch out cardboard pieces

Note:

- Choose only paperboard that is not easy to peel into layers to be used as point symbols.
- Plastic or glass beads, foam and metal pieces, etc. tend to deform or fall off during thermoforming process.
- APH Point Symbols tools in the Tactile Graphics Kit can be used to create embossed point shapes directly on the tactile page. They work better on cardboard than braille paper.

Glues:

- Tombow Mono Aqua liquid glue
- Elmer's Glue-All and Carpenter's Glue

Note:

- Mono Aqua by Tombow is a good choice for paper or cotton materials. The bottle has a broad tip for large area and a pen tip for small area, lines, and point symbols.
- Mono Aqua dries clear on the page and leaves almost no detectable residue.
- Elmer's Glue-All and Carpenter's Glue also work well with paper, cotton, and wood materials, but they tend to be too watery and will cause wobble and wrinkle on paper if applied too much.
- The tip of the original Elmer's bottle is usually too big for tactile use. It is recommended to fill the glue in to a squeeze bottle with a fine tip.
- Tacky glue tends to leave a detectable residue along the edges and makes the symbol "muddy".
- The adhesive back created by Xyron Sticker Maker with permanent adhesive cartridge works better for large pieces, e.g. areal symbols, but is usually not strong enough for small pieces or linear symbols (e.g. cardboard strips) to hold on to the page under the heat of thermoform.

Tools:

- Scissors
- X-Acto knife
- Hole punches of different sizes
- Protractor
- Compass
- Light box (APH or craft stores)
- Semi-transparent self-healing cutting board (Office Supply stores)
- Laser engraver

Note:

- Laser engraver is like a large X-Acto knife on a gradual scale, especially useful for irregular shapes, e.g. outline of a country. It can also be used to cut materials into uniform shapes, e.g. arrows, strips, point symbols, etc.

Helpful Tips:

Collage masters are used as mold to create thermoform copies. Choose materials that are heat resistant, e.g. paper or cotton based materials. Avoid materials that are sensitive to heat which may deform or fall off during thermoforming process, e.g. rubber or plastic based materials, sticky-backed foam, plastic beads, Wikki Stix, puff paint, etc.

Thermoform graphics often lose tactile distinctions from collage masters. Avoid choosing materials in contrast that are distinctive on master but tactually similar on thermoform copy. It is recommended to keep a thermoform copy of all available collage materials for your own reference.

When using denser materials, especially over a large area, air holes are usually necessary to be pricked close to the edge of the material (from front of graphic to back), to allow free flow of air during the thermoforming process to ensure quality thermoform copies.

Excess glue should be removed from graphic because it will be slightly detectable by the braille reader, causing the edges to be "muddy" or unclear.

Except embedded within textures, braille labels should be brailled directly on the page, not cut & paste on the braille paper, because the edges of the cutout piece become a tactile "box" around the label and may cause more clutter.

Collage, tooling, and embossed braille may be combined to form a tactile graphic master to achieve better distinction and readability.

Finding Tactile Graphics is a Snap!

The Tactile Graphic Image Library (TGIL) provides access to a wide variety of image templates, free of charge. These quality images can be used by teachers, transcribers, parents, and others to create stand-alone tactile graphics or graphics designed to supplement existing materials.

The TGIL website offers quick, free registration. After establishing an account, you will have access to over 1,000 print images in PDF format. Some images have complete graphics including braille labels, but most simply provide a great starting point for you to create custom tactile graphics. You can adapt each graphic to fit your educational goals and make it readable in the tactile medium you've chosen.

After you've downloaded an image, you can edit it in any commercial vector drawing program such as CorelDRAW, Adobe Illustrator, or in freeware programs like Inkscape. Once you have customized the print graphic to your satisfaction, you can turn it into a tactile graphic by several methods such as collage, microcapsule (swell) paper, or embossing on a braille embosser. You may need to convert the PDF files to another file format for embossing.

TGIL Features

- Tactile Graphic Image Library is completely FREE!
- Over 1,400 assets available including 3D files.
- Check the box at the bottom of the registration page to sign up for emails. We'll send out updates quarterly.
- You can submit your own graphics to APH for review and we will consider them for addition to the TGIL.
- If you have questions or require technical support, email us at tgfeedback@aph.org or shart@aph.org.

Graphic Variety

The TGIL features graphics in the subjects of art, education, mathematics, orientation and mobility, science, social studies, and more. New graphics are added frequently, so check back often.

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Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085
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info@aph.org • www.aph.org
Shopping: <http://shop.aph.org>

Tactile Graphic Image Library



Instructions for Utilizing the Tactile Graphics Image Library

Please read this before downloading any graphics from the database

Our purpose in providing this free service is to offer templates for good tactile designs and to help facilitate communication for those involved with the design and execution of tactile graphics. *Many of the graphics in the TGIL provide only starting points for tactile designs and are not finished products suitable for instant tactile graphics.*

Images will require alterations based on:

- **Content needed** – The features of your textbook's images will probably be different from what is offered in the database. With every image, you will need to adapt the graphic to fit your educational goals and to make it readable in the medium you've chosen.
- **Medium to be used** – As much as possible, the files reflect good tactile design through the use of line thickness and spacing. Still, there is no universal design for a tactile image that applies to all production methods. A design suitable for a Braille embosser is much different from one appropriate for microcapsule paper (e.g., Swell paper) output or a collage-readied graphic. The amount of detail and variety of line paths, point symbols, and textures varies from method to method. Graphic methods with minimal height or texture options will need to be greatly simplified. Matching the final tactile design to a production method is critical.
- **Labels** – Most of the images lack Braille labeling. This gives you freedom to add labels or a key as needed.

Most images are presented in .pdf format that can be edited using a commercial drawing program such as CorelDraw or Adobe Illustrator, or any freeware vector drawing program such as Inkscape. The .pdf files may not be editable in the "Draw" features of programs such as Word, Paint or PowerPoint. They may need to be converted to another file format if you plan to send them to an embosser.

Please read and follow the Guidelines for Design of Tactile Graphics posted on the APH web site: <http://www.aph.org/research/guides.htm>. If you have questions, comments, or want to share helpful hints, please contact us: tgfeedback.aph.org!

The TGIL also hosts model 3D files. These files are in the .stl format accepted by most 3D printers.

The only legal and authorized use of these files is for the nonprofit production of replacement parts for APH products. It is advised these files be used without modification; as APH cannot guarantee the safety or educational efficacy of the resulting product if files are modified. Please be aware the quality of the resulting product will vary dependent upon the 3D printer used.

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Female Inmates Learn to Transcribe Books to Braille

08/22/2017 10:15 pm ET

CONCORD MONITOR

By Christopher Zoukis



For more information about the prison braille program at the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women, contact:

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OR

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New Hampshire Dept of Education

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They may look hard to figure out for most, but a whole lot of raised dots are translating to new opportunities for a group of female inmates in New Hampshire.

The state's department of education has joined up with the New Hampshire Department of Corrections to teach a handful of female prisoners how to transcribe learning and reading materials into Braille.

The women will complete their training by the end of 2017, and then will go to work as transcribers on materials from the department of education and the American Printing House for the Blind.

Molly Martel is one of the 14 women in the Hampshire program, and she looks forward to transcribing menus, textbooks and novels into Braille. She's currently serving her fifth year of a 20-40 year sentence for murdering a friend. "To know I could actually do something good for somebody, that is good to know," Martel said in a media interview.

Nicole Belonga is another inmate that is happy to be learning Braille. She's working on a 15-30 year sentence for manslaughter in the death of her daughter, and knows that gaining employment once she is released will be an uphill battle. "I'm scared," she said in a media interview. "It's going to be pretty hard to get a job, and I'm not delusional about it. To know that it was something that I could get certified to do when I am home was a big draw for me."

The training is not easy. To learn Braille, each student has to memorize the Braille cell, which is made up of six possible dot configurations in two columns. After learning how to

write in Braille, students must slowly start the transcription process, first by transcribing words, then moving on to sentences before tackling full documents. In the prison, the ladies must learn the Braille cell visually, not by touch. Staring at the dots for long periods of time can take a toll on the eyes, but most are determined to push through and become acclimatized to this unique method of reading after several weeks. To achieve certification, each inmate must submit a transcribed 35-page document to the Library of Congress.

The New Hampshire Braille transcription program was created to give the State's female inmates work skills and experience, while also helping to ease the expanding need for Braille transcribers in region. It's one of about 30 such prison programs nationwide.

Many are familiar with Louis Braille, and credit him as the inventor of this language for the blind, but he was actually building on something called "night writing" that was invented by Charles Barbier in the early 1800s. Barbier saw soldiers use lamps to read combat messages after dark – a move that showed their position to the enemy and resulted in their deaths. He created a series of raised dots so the soldiers could read by touch instead of sight. It was a noble effort, but Barbier's system was a bit cumbersome.

At the age of 11, Braille, who was not born blind, but accidentally stabbed himself in the eye with an awl when he was young, modified Barbier's night writing, making it more efficient and easier to decode. It took Braille nearly nine years to perfect his system.

The National Federation for the Blind estimates that 2.3 percent (7,358,400) of non-institutionalized American adults (ages 16-75) have a visual disability. According to information collected in 2012 by the U.S. Department of Justice, 7.1 percent of state and federal prisoners suffered from vision impairment.

When one thinks of the prison population it's easy to forget that it's comprised of a very diverse mix of able-bodied and differently-abled people. With vision impairment being an issue both in and out of prison, programs where inmates can learn an employable skill such as Braille transcription benefit society as whole.

Christopher Zoukis is the author of Federal Prison Handbook: The Definitive Guide to Surviving the Federal Bureau of Prisons, College for Convicts: The Case for Higher Education in American Prisons (McFarland & Co., 2014) and Prison Education Guide (Prison Legal News Publishing, 2016). He can be found online at ChristopherZoukis.com and PrisonerResource.com.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/female-inmates-learn-to-transcribe-books-to-braille_us_599ce4d8e4b02289f76190fe

Atlanta Braille Publisher Helps College-Bound Blind Students

By [Tasnim Shamma](#) • Jun 5, 2017

Listen - WABE-NPR Atlanta:

<http://news.wabe.org/post/atlanta-braille-publisher-helps-college-bound-blind-students>



Kayla Weathers became the first fully-blind student to graduate from Dalton State College in North Georgia in December 2016.

Photo Credit: Courtesy Kayla Weathers

When it came time for college, Kayla Weathers said she thought she was prepared.

She attended public school for most of her educational career, graduating from the Georgia Academy for the Blind in Macon. Weathers, who is blind and uses a white cane to get around, said her first semester at Dalton State College in North Georgia was difficult.

“I didn’t do terribly, like I didn’t flunk out or anything, but I was like I need to, you know, have more confidence in travel and like cooking for myself and things,” Weathers said.

For blind students, some classes can feel out of reach because materials like textbooks and exams may not be readily available for those courses in a braille or audio format.



Annie Maxwell, who is blind, proofreads a braille copy of 'A Kept Woman', an Atlanta-based murder mystery, while Ted Patterson a braille production specialist at AMAC reads the novel out loud.

Photo Credit: Tasnim Shamma / WABE

But there are groups trying to make these materials more accessible. The [AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center](#) at Georgia Tech was founded in 2006. Its braille production center is one of the few in the United States catered to blind and visually impaired college students.

For more information about the AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center, contact:

Guy Toles, Braille Services Manager

guy.toles@amac.gatech.edu or 404-894-8680

Self-Advocacy

Weathers said in addition to gaining more independent living skills, she said she had to learn how to advocate for herself, such as requesting accommodations from professors. So in 2011, Weathers took a gap year to attend a blindness skills [training center](#) in Minneapolis.

Weathers explained to professors at least a semester in advance that she would need class materials to be transcribed to braille or in an electronic format that she could listen to. During exams, a professional scribe sat next to her and she would dictate her answers. The scribe would then transcribe her braille answers to the Roman alphabet.

"It's kind of funny. I tell people I'm a visual learner even though I've been totally blind my entire life," Weathers said. "But to really understand something, especially academically, I would prefer to read it and have it under my fingers because I feel like it sticks in my head better."

University System of Georgia

Weathers went on to make history in December 2016 as the first fully-blind student to graduate from Dalton State.

The University System of Georgia, which consists of 28 public colleges and universities, has an average of 350 students each year who are blind or visually impaired.

These schools send requests for braille transcription services to the AMAC Accessibility Solutions and Research Center at Georgia Tech.

Guy Toles, AMAC's braille services manager, said his department processes about 400 orders per year. Many of these orders are for science, technology, engineering and math courses.

"Those subjects require advanced codes, the need to see things in a spatial arrangement, but then also, the maps, charts, diagrams, and figures that have to be recreated in order for the braille reader to feel and understand a concept," Toles said.

Heavy Books

Toles shows off a biochemistry textbook, which includes diagrams of molecules that mimic a collage art project. Strings of yarn and strips of paper are embedded amidst the braille.

Since braille takes up more physical space, Toles said a math book that is 1,000 pages could easily be "5,000 braille pages."

Braille books are more expensive than average college textbooks. Converting just five chapters of a science book, the average order, into braille can cost up to \$15,000. But once it's on hand, braille reprints cost about 5 percent of the original cost, or about \$500.

"The types of subjects that I see students who are blind and vision impaired are enrolled in now from an aeronautical school, to some of the highest levels of math, computer coding. I think that's a sign that equal access is only going to improve," Toles said.

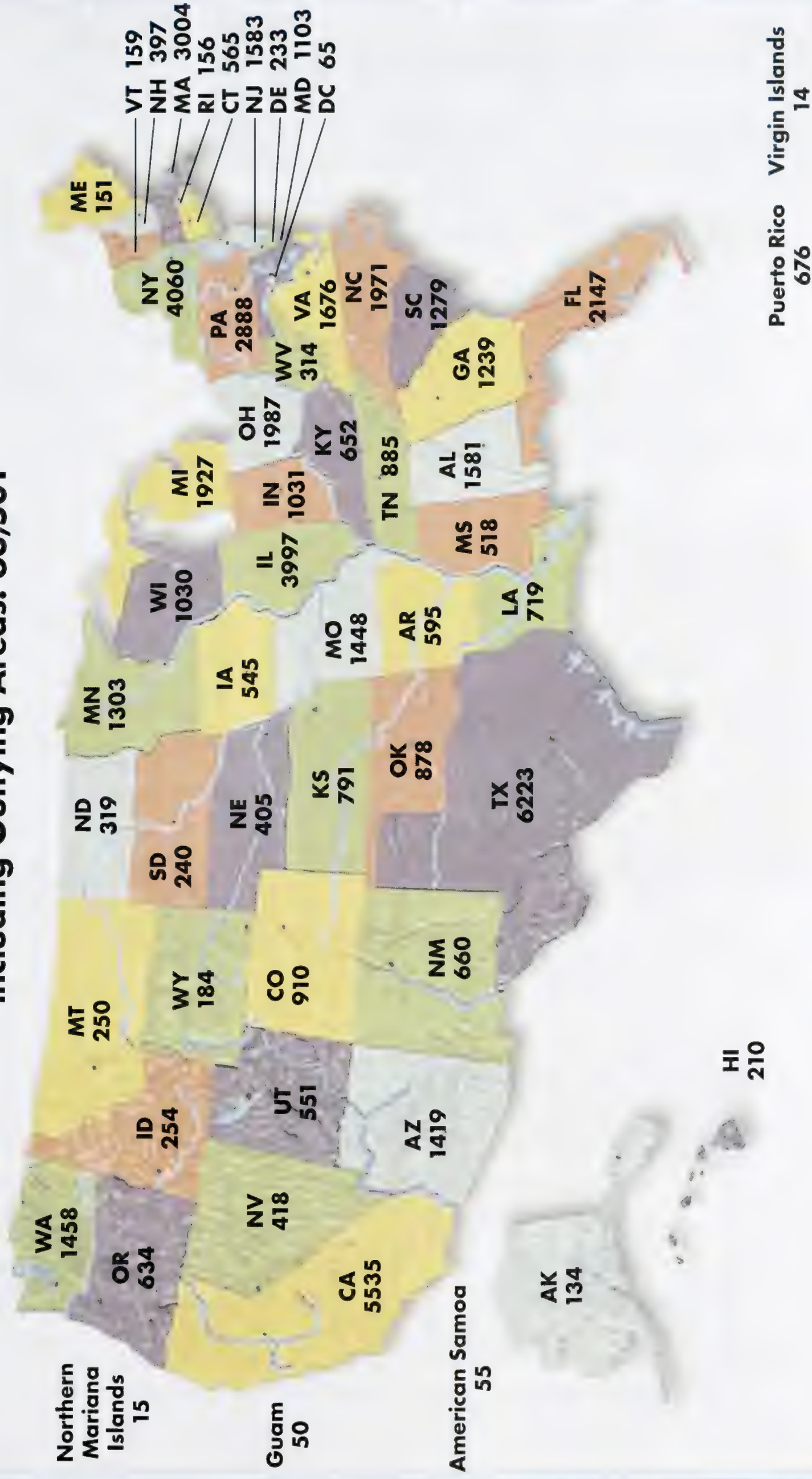
That's what Kayla Weathers is working on now as she applies to graduate school. She said that one day she wants to teach other blind students how to navigate college.

Act to Promote the Education of the Blind of 1879

Number of Blind and Visually Impaired Students Registered in the Federal Quota Program

As of January 2017

Total Students in the United States,
including Outlying Areas: 63,501



About the Federal Quota Program

The Federal Act to Promote the Education of the Blind was passed by Congress in 1879 to provide adapted educational materials to eligible students working at less than college level who meet the definition of blindness. An annual registration of eligible students determines a per-capita amount of money designated for the purchase of educational materials produced by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH). These funds are credited to Federal Quota accounts, which are maintained and administered by APH and its Ex Officio Trustees (EOTs) throughout the country and outlying areas.

APH is responsible for the overall administration of this law, which is accomplished through a network of professionals designated as EOTs. These professionals are the heads of residential schools for the blind; chief state school officers of each state department of education; heads of private, nonprofit schools for the blind; heads of programs for students who are multiply disabled; and heads of rehabilitation agencies. EOTs in each state and outlying area are legally entrusted with the administration of the Federal Quota Program for students within their systems. Registration of students and all orders for materials to be purchased with Federal Quota funds must be directed through EOTs.

For over 130 years, the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind has been affecting positive change in the lives of Americans who are visually impaired. Through materials that range from accessible books to fine motor development materials, from braille writing equipment to talking computer products and digital technology, APH and the Act address the specific learning needs that a vision loss creates.

The purpose of the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind is to place the most appropriate educational aids, tools, and supplies in the hands and lives of every student with vision loss below college level. APH works in partnership with the federal government to help these students achieve in the classroom and succeed in the workplace.



American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

800.223.1839 • info@aph.org • www.aph.org

NPBN

National Prison
Braille Network

Prison Braille Best Practices

Starting a Prison Braille Program

In the U.S. today, there are about 40 braille production facilities operating within prison walls. Both men and women inmates learn braille, a six-dot system of reading and writing used by people who are blind, and earn Literary Braille Certification from the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress (referred to as NLS). They can then transcribe print material into tactile (touchable) dots for braille readers. Advanced certifications – for Math and Science braille, textbook formatting, proofreading, and more – can also be earned. Advanced certifications lead to broader market opportunities and higher income, both for individual transcribers and prison braille programs.

Professionals managing these programs describe them as “win-win” initiatives, since all parties involved benefit in some meaningful way. Inmates gain valuable job skills prior to leaving prison, and many “graduates” of prison braille programs go on to become independent braille transcribers working from their own homes following release. Braille readers have access to more high quality materials in this accessible media. This is especially true for students who are blind and need textbooks in braille.



Just as every prison is different, with its own staff, rules, regulations, and culture, every prison braille program is unique. For that reason, a “one size fits all” description will not work in every correctional facility. These guidelines for starting a prison braille program should be used as a road map of important issues to address, and each program should be customized to meet the needs of the institution that houses it.

Key Ingredients When Starting a Prison Braille Program

- **Agreement among key agencies and officials to explore establishing a program.**

All prison braille programs operate – to one degree or another – as partnerships between individual correctional facilities and at least one agency working to provide braille materials for people who are blind. Other correctional or vision agencies may become partners as well. For example, in Kentucky, the KCI (Kentucky Correctional Industries) Braille Services prison braille program operates as a partnership between the prison in which it is housed – Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women (KCIW), KCI, and the American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, KY, located about 30 minutes from the prison.

- **Conduct market research:** Identify institutions and agencies that purchase braille materials for people who are blind, as well as direct links to braille readers.

Local and state public school systems, state schools for the blind, public and private colleges, and government and non-profit agencies serving people who are visually impaired would all be excellent groups to contact to determine the market for braille transcription services in your area. Local, state, and national providers of braille should all be explored. Restaurants, museums, hotels, and utilities should provide materials in braille for those who read this medium. A list of these potential “customers” should be included in the marketing plan you develop.

An important component of this market research is to find out whether or not the state in which the prison will be housed allows products and services to be sold beyond state borders. Laws in this area will set the parameters for your customer base. If sales are limited to in-state entities, the program may not generate as much business as it could if sales could be offered nationwide.

- **Secure leadership support from partnering agencies.**

It is imperative that the warden at the correctional facility in which the program will be housed supports the prison braille program and is willing to let vision professionals enter the prison regularly, bring supplies into the program, and transport completed braille materials out of the prison. The president or CEO of the vision agency or superintendent of a school for the blind must also support the program and this partnership. If any other agencies are involved, their leaders must sign on.



- **Identify goals for the program and for each partner.**

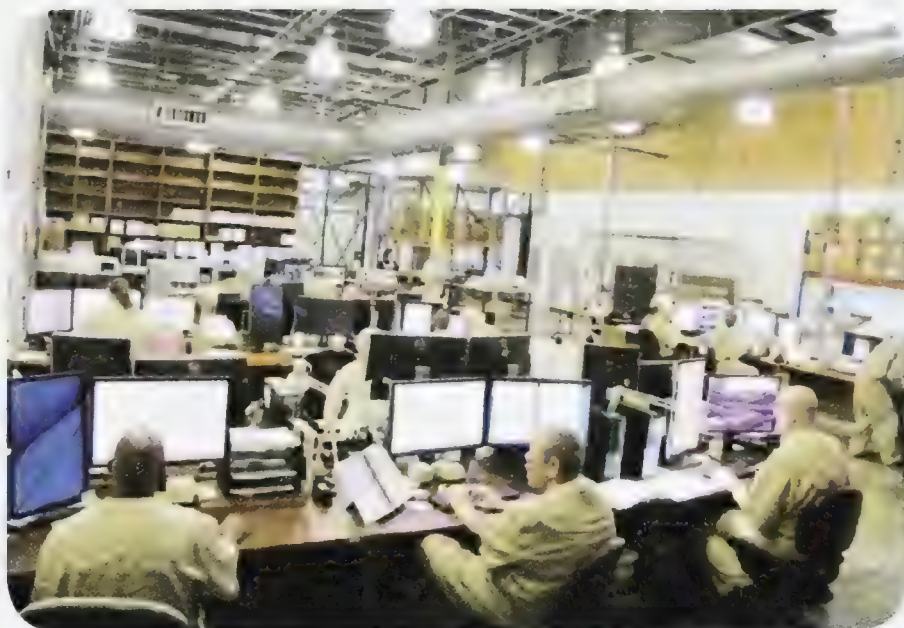
An example of a program goal could be – to establish a successful business that produces excellent quality materials for braille readers. A corrections facility goal could be – to educate, rehabilitate, and prepare offenders for reentry by providing them with opportunities to gain job skills, discover their own talents and skills, and establish a viable career path following release. A vision agency goal could be – to develop a team of highly qualified braille transcribers who will produce quality braille materials, especially textbooks for students who are blind in grades K-12.

- **Decide under what auspices the prison braille program will operate within the correctional facility.**

Prison braille programs can function well as either educational/vocational programming, or as correctional industries businesses. This decision is typically based on the partners involved and the overall goals of the program. Educational/vocational programs are considered primarily to be a learning experience to build vocational skills. As such, inmates in educational/vocational prison

braille programs are typically not paid for their time, and braille transcription services can be offered to customers at no cost.

Correctional industries programs are designed to not only educate inmates and prepare them for careers upon reentry, but also to be self-sustaining business operations. Inmate transcribers in correctional industries are typically paid while learning and working, and customers are charged for braille transcription services. If the program will be a correctional industries business and inmates in the state can be paid, a pay scale should be established.



There are many examples of both educational/vocational and correctional industries prison braille programs throughout the National Prison Braille Network. If you would like a referral to individual program managers to gather information, contact APH here: jhawkins@aph.org.

► **Determine the size and scope of the program, as well as the services the program will provide.**

The KCI Braille Services program started in 2000, with the capacity to employ 15 women in a correctional industries setting. In 2017, it expanded to include 20 positions. Prison braille programs can operate with very few inmates (3-5). As of 2017, the largest known program in the U.S. is Mountain View Braille Services in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice where 100 female inmates participate in the program.

Some programs offer services for people with visual impairments in addition to braille transcription, such as large type printing, audio recordings, and eye glass repair and distribution.

► **Secure financial and in-kind support needed.**

Typically, financial and in-kind support comes from the partnering agencies establishing a prison braille program. If outside funding is needed, local Lions Clubs can be approached, since they specifically fund projects that benefit people who are blind and visually impaired. Private foundations can also be a source of grant funding to start a program. Look for foundations that support programs for people with vision loss.

► **Prison personnel must determine that qualified inmates will be available to work in the program.**

Although inmate qualifications for these programs vary from prison to prison, typical participants have at least a high-school education or GED, know how to operate a computer, have at least 5-8 years left to serve on their sentence, are highly motivated to learn new skills, and have not broken any prison rules for at least a year. It is advised that inmates who have been in prison for less than 1-2 years not participate in a prison braille program, since they may not have fully adjusted to prison life.



- **Identify a dedicated, secure space where the program will be located within the prison.**

The size and specifications of the space will be determined by how many inmates the program plans to employ, and the scope of services offered. In a typical program, each transcriber trainee has a work station including a desk and computer. Larger work areas are dedicated to tactile graphics design and production, embossing and thermoforming, and assembling textbook pages. Since embossers can be very loud when operating, they should be separated

from transcribers whenever possible. Space should also be available to store paper, supplies, tools, and equipment.

- **Recruit and hire a qualified professional to teach braille and manage all braille aspects of the business.**

This is typically the responsibility of the vision agency partnering in the prison braille program. For instance, this could be with a full-time or part-time job. It could be a faculty or staff member for the school or agency who agrees to work at the prison part-time.

- **Assign corrections personnel to provide security and routine maintenance for the program.**

In Kentucky, the manager of Kentucky Correctional Industries at the Kentucky Correctional Institution for Women is responsible for security at the prison braille program site, and for ensuring that inmates in the program adhere to all prison rules and regulations. Security should always be provided by correctional facility or industry staff, since they are well trained on prison security and safety.

- **Include an annual Open House for the prison braille program that will be supported by all partners.**

Georgia Braille Transcribers at Central State Prison in Macon, GA, has a long established and very successful Open House each year. Inmate transcribers prepare a program describing their work in the prison braille program, the impact it has on their lives and the impact it has on braille readers in the state. Elected officials, including members of Congress and the Governor and his wife are invited, as are corrections officials and vision professionals from throughout the state, and local media outlets. This provides an excellent public relations opportunity and builds good will and support for the program.

- **Create a contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among partners that all parties have agreed to and signed.**

This agreement should include:

- A program description: location, size, scope of services, work hours, staffing, start date, etc.;
- Partner roles, goals, and responsibilities, including a decision-making hierarchy and troubleshooting processes;
- Clearly outlined financial responsibilities and a bookkeeping system;
- Ownership of equipment and software in the program.

To see a sample Memorandum of Understanding contact APH: jhawkins@aph.org.

Conclusion

The American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in Louisville, KY, has coordinated the National Prison Braille Network since 2001. APH tries to maintain a directory of prison braille programs across the country, and hosts an annual gathering of corrections and vision professionals in Louisville each October, called the National Prison Braille Forum, to discuss the challenges and benefits these programs offer. If someone you know could benefit from joining the network (at no charge), please send them this membership information and application form to complete: <http://www.aph.org/pbf/membership/>.

Jayma Hawkins is the National Prison Braille Network Coordinator at APH. She can be reached via email at jhawkins@aph.org, or via phone at 502-899-2302.

*Nancy Lacewell, American Printing House for the Blind
nlacewell@aph.org*

